

Correspondence

The Editorial Board will be pleased to receive and consider for publication correspondence containing information of interest to physicians or commenting on issues of the day. Letters ordinarily should not exceed 600 words, and must be typewritten, double-spaced and submitted in duplicate (the original typescript and one copy). Authors will be given an opportunity to review any substantial editing or abridgment before publication.

On Smoking and Advertising

TO THE EDITOR: Dr. E. R. W. Fox's letter in your June issue (pages 559-560) was slightly off track, if not completely derailed.

The tobacco manufacturers have repeatedly stressed that they do not want or seek young people as customers. Cigarette advertising is a means of maintaining or increasing brand loyalties in an established market of smokers. Its aim and result is not "enticing" new smokers.

HEW's John Pinney, Director of the Office of Smoking and Health, refuted the "sinister advertising" charge when he said, "It is quite correct not to make ads the culprit in terms of why teenagers take up smoking. Advertising certainly is not the culprit."

The tobacco industry's advertising standards are some of the strictest in practice. All models must be 25 years old and look it. There is no advertising, sampling or promotion of cigarettes on any campus in America. No testimonials by athletes or celebrities are used in cigarette advertising.

One fact that is too often forgotten is that the cigarette manufacturers volunteered ten years ago to stop advertising on television and radio, because youth audiences had become too large.

Attempts to tie the teenage smoking problem to anything other than misguided peer pressure are wrong. After all, marijuana use among teenagers has substantially increased, without any advertising.

RICHARD R. MILLER
Director of Media Relations
The Tobacco Institute, Inc.
Washington, DC

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Dr. Fox Replies

TO THE EDITOR: Mr. Miller, as Director of Media Relations for the Tobacco Institute, is understandably irritated by my comments in the June issue. I find his arguments unconvincing.

To suggest that magazine and newspaper advertising has no impact on the youth of America goes counter to Madison Avenue experience. The magazines that are most widely seen by young people—ladies' and sports' periodicals—abound with seductive cigarette ads.

The mere fact that the tobacco industry has made some concessions regarding their advertising format means they know that advertising most certainly does influence impressionable youthful minds. The advertising message is clear: Cigarette smoking is glamorous. To smoke is to enjoy gracious living. Smoking is sexy, it lends charisma. These messages produce "peer pressure."

It would be best, of course, if the printed media would voluntarily follow the example of TV and radio. It is noteworthy that two fine magazines, *Sunset* and *Good Housekeeping*, carry no cigarette ads whatsoever.

At the recent meeting of the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association the members sent out this strong directive: "Step up the antismoking campaign."

It looks like we are on the right track after all.

E. R. W. FOX, MD
Special Editor for Idaho
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Exercise and Neuromuscular Disease

TO THE EDITOR: The provocative title "Hazards of Exercise in Patients with Weakness of Neuromuscular Origin," an Epitome of Progress in the August issue,¹ may be a disservice to those with neuromuscular disease and inadvertently promotes a nihilistic management approach. The origins of potential misinformation are threefold: (1) extrapolation from animal models to man, (2) comparison of normal and *leaky* myopathic muscle and (3) generalizations about neuromuscular disease.